



## Door-to-Door Meat Sales: What's at Steak?

**Release Date:** December 4, 2012

**Contact:** Raechelle Cline, 608-224-5005

Jerad Albracht, 608-224-5007

Jim Dick, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON – In today's fast-paced world, shopping at home can be both convenient and timesaving. But when it comes to door-to-door meat sales, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) experts say, be aware of the risks and the rules.

"In some door-to-door meat sale situations, it's hard for consumers to know who they are really buying their meat from and whether it is being handled safely. One way to confirm the seller is legitimate is to see and copy the information from their mobile retail food establishment license," says Jill Ball, recall and emergency response coordinator for DATCP's Division of Food Safety.

To evaluate meat and poultry safety, consumers should get as much information about the company and dealer as possible before buying from a door-to-door dealer, in particular:

- Ask for the company's product literature and read it thoroughly.
- Make sure the product has been carried in a refrigerated vehicle.
- Read the label on the package or carton before you buy. If the establishment number where the meat or poultry was inspected is not on the package, ask for it or don't buy the product.

In addition to the food safety risk, consumers should also know the rules governing door-to-door sales. "Wisconsin's direct marketing law governs door-to-door transactions and protects consumers from unscrupulous sales tactics," said Sandy Chalmers, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. "The rules are strict about how the product pitch must be presented and the protections that are in place for the consumer after a sale."

Consumer protection elements of the direct marketing law include:

- Before direct marketers say anything other than a short greeting, they must disclose who they are and what they are selling.
- Before finalizing a sale and taking a payment, they must disclose the cost, quantity, conditions, refund policy, and the name and address of the principal company.
- In addition, a direct marketer cannot bill a consumer's credit card without the consumer's authorization and the marketers must keep records of transactions for at least two years.

The rules also prohibit:

- Threatening, intimidating or harassing consumers
- Failing to leave a consumer's premises upon request
- Representing to consumers that they are conducting a survey or a contest when they are trying to sell goods or attempting to get information for sales prospects
- Misrepresenting that they are affiliated with a government or third-party organization

"If you don't have the time to use these safety tips when the doorbell rings or if the salesperson is overly aggressive, take a pass," Ball says. "Your health and that of your family is at stake."

If you decide to purchase anyway and later have second thoughts, you have the right to change your mind.

For transactions greater than \$25 where the goods are for personal, family or household use, Wisconsin law provides a three-day “cooling-off” period – more commonly known as the “three-day right to cancel.” Consumers have three business days to cancel a door-to-door sale or any other sale that occurs away from the merchant’s regular place of business, or where the transaction is directed to the particular consumer via mail, e-mail or telephone solicitation. Sellers must inform buyers of the three-day cancellation period in writing, and the period starts after the seller has provided this information.

If you wish to cancel a transaction within the three-day period, send your cancellation notice by certified mail to ensure that you have written proof that your notice was sent on time. Your money must be returned to you within 10 days. If the seller does not pick-up the product in 20 days, you may keep it.

For more information about meat safety, visit [datcp.wi.gov/food/meat safety](http://datcp.wi.gov/food/meat%20safety). For additional information on Wisconsin’s direct marketing law or another consumer issue, visit [datcp.wisconsin.gov](http://datcp.wisconsin.gov), send an e-mail to [datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov](mailto:datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov) or call the hotline toll-free at 1-800-422-7128. You can also connect with us on Twitter at [twitter.com/widatcp](https://twitter.com/widatcp) or Facebook at [facebook.com/widatcp](https://facebook.com/widatcp).

###